

Acceptance Speech by H.E. Shaikh Dr.
Saleh bin Abdullah bin Himeid
2016 Winner of the King Faisal International Prize
For Service to Islam

38th KFIP Awards Ceremony
Wednesday 23/03/2016 (14/06/1437H.)

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques
King Salman Bin Abdulaziz,
Your Highnesses,
Your Eminences,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests.

Praise to Allah and peace and prayers upon the Messenger of Allah and all his family and companions.

In such a jubilant situation, one is so overwhelmed to be able to express his feelings, other than saying: O Allah, make me better than they thought, forgive me for what they don't know and don't let me down for what they say of me.

The great name of this Prize and its title "Service to Islam" entail an enormous responsibility. Who can claim to serve this great religion to the extent of winning prizes? Glory to Allah – this is a great matter. However, in the light of this selection and honor, which is neither expected nor sought, a Muslim must recall the Prophet's directive in the *Hadith* narrated by Ibn Omer, may Allah bless them, who said: "The Prophet used to give Omer ibn Al Khattab some money grant and Omer would say: 'O' Messenger of Allah, Give it to a needier one than me.' The Prophet would say 'Take it in your possession or give it in charity. Take whatever money comes to you while you are not keen to have it and not asking for it; but you should not seek to have what you are not given. "

Drawing from that directive I might say that the selection committee has held in high regard those involved in serving this great shrine - the first House of worship appointed for mankind, and endowed with blessings, guidance and everlasting protection. It is a tremendous reward from Allah

to be an *Imam*, speaker and teacher at the Holy Mosque. It is enough to note that this country's monarch deemed the title "Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques" as the most gracious title for him to hold, unparalleled by any other title of nobility or elegance that he could and deserves to hold. I pray to Almighty Allah to grant us with the ability to obey Him, serve His religion and pursue virtuousness and benevolence wherever it is, and to pardon us for our mistakes, conceal our defects and inadequacies, and forgive all our sins, known or secret, and all that He knows more than us.

Distinguished Guests,

Prizes can be a source of honor and prominence when their objective is to bring people together, unite good deeds for the benefit of mankind and recognize advances in different theoretical and applied fields of knowledge. I believe that this Prize in its different branches is at the forefront of prizes that recognize intellectual achievements while maintaining its neutrality and fairness. This is no wonder since the Prize bears the name of the great martyr, King Faisal bin Abdul Aziz, the pioneer of Islamic solidarity, and also because it comes from this blessed land, the cradle of Islam, the site of the Islamic message and the mission of Mohammed, peace and prayers be upon him, the protector of Islamic sanctity under the flag of *Shari'a*. It also comes from a land whose leaders share a luminous history of serving Islam, celebrating it, serving its followers everywhere and exercising power and determination in pursuing their task. Thanks and gratitude to Allah.

I donate the monetary value of the Prize to Shaikh Abdulla bin Muhammad Bin Himeid Charitable Academy established twenty years ago in Makkah Al-Mukarramah to provide education to male and female students from poor African countries, as a contribution towards the Academy's educational message, and to help their staff in performing their duties, may Allah bless them and bless their efforts, and reward them for their efforts to educate Muslim sons and daughters.

I pray to Allah, Lord of the Great Throne, to bestow this Prize with increasing success, magnanimity and progress, and to bless the Prize's patrons, sons and daughters of King Faisal, led by His Royal Highness Prince Khalid Al-Faisal, Chairman of King Faisal International Prize Board, who envisaged, carried out and succeeded in building this institution.

Assalamu Alaikum.